

LOWELL'S
BOOK OF
SONGISTS

LAWRENCE

To
Willard and Florence

in

Remembrance

of an
Enjoyable Birthday

Your Affectionate
Father.

"

Salt Lake City.
Nov. 22nd 1917.

" "

A LOVER'S BOOK OF SONNETS



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A
LOVER'S
BOOK OF
SONNETS

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LAMBOURNE

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BY ALFRED LAMBOURNE

TO THEE.

*Love's silver star is burning in the west,
The fervent summer eve is passing slow,
From eastern purple o'er the mountain's crest,
Jove's golden planet looks on earth below.*

*The circling curlews make their plaintive sounds,
The winds among the water-rushes sigh,
Thy lover's thoughts pursue their endless rounds,
And in his heart is that which cannot die.*

*And once you walked this path and at my side,
When all my thought in new-born hope was thine,
The twilight lay, thus, o'er the landscape wide,
And thy love-glances pledged thy life as mine:*

*Ah, now that golden summer time is dead,
Yet I do love as ere its hours were sped!*

THE SONNETS.

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I.

WHY ART THOU SAD?

And thou art sad, Beloved, and know not why,
Thy heart from past, the now, the future weaves,
Strange dreams o'er which thy soul in sickness
grieves,

And thou dost waste thine hours and useless sigh,
And can no pleasure find of earth or sky,
In autumn's wan, or gold and scarlet eves,
The restless carpet of the fallen leaves,
That seem to whisper that all things must die?
Why art those eyes of thine so filled with tears;
Why thus with sadness all thy moments bind?
Its gifts anew the time of blossom brings,
If pain, yet joy, doth lie within the years—
The hopes of all the past thy soul shall find,
Thy heart the tumult of a thousand springs!

II.

BEFORE I SLEEP.

Through the high window slant the lunar rays,
Across my treasured books now brightly fall,
To make a splendor on my study wall,
And on my finished lines the silver plays.
Yet still thy face it is that meets my gaze,
Though thou art gone love makes me still a thrall,
My ears are deaf unless to that one call,
It is for thee I seek the poet's bays.
Upon that massive tome hath lain thy gloves,
The while I held the little hands in mine,
And there hath been the fairness of thy face,
Where on my verse the paly moonbeams shine;
That thou wast here has holy made this place,
Now will I sleep and dream again our loves.

III.

THE HEART SECRET.

To reach a secret of a heart I strive,
Yet thou dost frown and all my labors foil,
Or with a smile reward the anxious toil,
That nearer to my hope I ne'er arrive.
And yet desire doth on refusal thrive,
And though that secret I would make a spoil,
Yet my own questions on my heart recoil—
Thou wilt not say, “Become Love’s priest and
shrive.”

If it so anger thee when I so plead,
Dost ask the why I ask thee to confess?
If that thy heart of my heart knew the need,
Then still one heart that secret would possess:
Thus be it ours to live the perfect creed—
Beloved, let our two hearts be one recess!

IV.

WHERE FLOWERS GREW.

Thou tell'st me, Love, that into azure breaks
The blossom where we sat beneath the oak,
Where, in low whispers, we our passion spoke,
That there the earth the hue of heaven takes.
And yet more sacred now that place it makes,
That while the ancient stillness no voice broke,
A vanished hour, alone, thou did'st invoke,
Wishing its moments back for both our sakes.
Were thy dreams rich in memories and hope,
Amid that beauty held so near the skies?
My thanks that I did share once more thy hours
While crept the twilight up the mountain slope!
How sweet a thought, Mine, in thy question lies—
“Was it our love that blossomed into flowers?”

V.

THUS NATURE TELLS.

From the rich perfume of the rose's heart,
The notes of ecstasy the wild bird sings,
The quiver of the outstretched sea-gull's wings,
The golden light that fills the twilight sky,
The shoreward waves of ocean as they sigh,
The summer clouds that wreath the mountains'
crest,
The voice of torrents twining down its breast—
From all of these our passion takes a part.
'Tis in the bloom of earth, the stars above,
My sight it meets, alway to me it speaks;
'Tis in the meadowed vale, the clustered trees,
Upon the snows that gleam upon the peaks—
Yet I but waste a thought in naming these,
For all in nature doth reveal our love.

VI.

THE DAGGER'S POINT.

A foolish act I did, all mad the while—
To place that dagger's point unto thy heart!
Then to thine eyes I saw the hot tears start,
As pillow'd on my arm was thy fair head.
Thou couldst not stiller been hadst thou been
dead;
And while to quickened breath I listened near,
Upon thy lips there was no sign of fear,
And mystic passion lay within that smile.
When I flung down the steel, nor thus would cheat,
Although no word of thine bade that I ceased,
How sweet to kiss the lids of thy closed eyes,
And hear thy heart against my own heart beat;
Yet sweeter still upon red lips to feast,
And meet thy sighs, My Love, again with sighs!

VII.

THE SIGN OF FATE.

When that white rose I placed within thy hair,
And sought to please thee with a lover's art,
Then unseen fate enacted unseen part,
And I a pleasure with a pain did share.
Then red my lips for drops of blood were there,
And of the rose's thorn I learned the smart,
While then a sharper pain pierced to my heart,
At that quick answer to my silent prayer.
When I did kiss thy locks in passion's stress,
As on their black lay that white gift of mine,
And found the hidden thorn meet my caress,
Love swiftly changed the meaning of Fate's sign:
How true did soul meet soul when thou did'st press
Those drops of blood from my wet lips to thine!

VIII.

THE SAME AS THEN.

The narrow streamlet swirls adown the glen,
To sloping ledges blue the gentian clings,
Its foam all white the mountain water flings,
And wild, gray cliffs its voice sends back again.
This place is solitude the same as then;
A year has passed and love thy image brings,
While to my lips a sigh of longing springs,
I murmur o'er the words writ by thy pen.
That year ago a letter here I read,
And then as now this ache was in my heart—
How useless, that I know, to question fate!
Upon this same gray stone I laid my head,
Since then we met, since then again did part—
For that which has been, yet for that I wait!



IX.

A LIFE PERFECT.

Were there a heart to beat in tune with mine,
That melody with peace my life would fill;
Should to my lips be placed love's sacred wine,
Then not my blood the world's neglect might chill.
Could such a love but answer my love's plea,
Then hope should be no longer as a ghost;
Were there one faith to share a faith in me,
Then fate itself not o'er my will should boast!
Were there a soul to meet my soul's true kiss,
To make two souls one soul in endless trust,
Then I would triumph, though the world might
 hiss,
Change to a crown of gold a crown of dust;
Then I could smile into the face of death,
And speak life perfect with my latest breath!

X.

IN LIGHT AND DARK.

In cloudless beauty came a summer dawn,
All white, like molten pearls, the eastern sky,
The rose was crimson on the golden lawn,
But in my heart a nameless fear did lie.
And now the skies are darkened with the rains,
The withered leaves before the cold winds flee,
Nor star nor moon look through the window panes,
Yet all content my thought doth dwell with thee.
In that dawn's rapture I did have no part,
But like this starless night my soul made moan,
Amid that beauty heavy was my heart,
But now resplendent is this gloom my own:
Without sweet trust the dawn was as the night,
But now thy faith hath made this darkness light.

XI.

ALL RAPTURES LACKING.

Again the summer marks the sylvan year,
But to its joyance all my heart is cold;
Ah! what to me, My Love, and thou not here,
The trefoil's tiny, clustered bells of gold?
What care have I, though soft the ringdove call,
To me thy voice is thousand times more sweet;
The gliding streams, the uplands, all things pall,
My wan lips hunger thy red lips to meet!
The linnet on the purple thistle swings,
The wild bee hums amid the clover bloom,
Its song the lark makes high on sunlit wings,
But not an echo in my heart finds room:
Ah! with thee here, here all delights would be,
All raptures lacking when I lack for thee!

XII.

WITHIN THE LOCKET.

My Love, these severed tresses from thy brow
Lie as a frame around thy pictured face,
And powerless the future years are now,
The white of age upon that black to trace.
That braided darkness on thy brow that's been,
In days to come will tell the present truth,
That severed hair shall keep its raven sheen,
To tell with that sweet face of thy rich youth.
Upon this locket tears I've often shed,
Where face and tresses lie in purest gold,
In kisses on that hair my lips hath fed,
And on that face which time shall not make old—
O, now that beauty here before me lies,
To meet again my lips and feast my eyes!

XIII.

THE TROUBLED DREAM.

My soul is filled, Beloved, with strangest fears,
Thee I saw lying, statue-like and mute,
And sharp into my heart a pain did shoot,
Nor could I make thee speak for all my tears.
Thou wast not dead, yet living didst not seem,
Thy little hands, thy face I praise so much,
Were marble white and cold to my lips' touch,
Ah! tell me true, My Own, what mean'st this dream?
Yes, there thy form as it were carved I saw,
With changeless smile thy lips my kisses met,
And thy pale beauty was without a flaw,
And at its strangeness I must marvel yet—
Chilled was my blood by those thy ruthless charms,
Dispel my fears, O Love, within thine arms!

XIV.

SWIFT CAME THE STORMS.

A storm had gathered in the noon-day skies,
Though at the dawning all the vault was clear,
The vivid lightnings dazzled then mine eyes,
And black the whirling clouds were far and near.
Yet ere the day was gone came other change,
The sun triumphant o'er the cloudy piles,
O'er valley, field and grove and mountain range,
The summer landscape bathed in golden smiles.
Swift came a change into love's summer day,
That its sweet dawning darkened all with storms,
And yet how tender was the parting ray,
That with the twilight came all rich and warm:
Hand clasped in hand, we wandered on love's path,
When gone the flash of eyes, the tears of wrath!

XV.

THUS I AM TAUGHT.

Alone in splendor of unclouded light,
The star of eve hangs o'er the stream's wild source,
I hear the unseen waters downward course,
And watch that burning lamp beyond the height.
While through the gloom yon planet shines so
bright,
The wakeful owl with hooting has grown hoarse;
But that far sign doth break the omen's force,
And rest I seek nor fear the hours of night.
Ah, silver lamp, perhaps she gazed on thee,
Before her head she on the pillow laid;
Then on her lips was there one vow for me,
For I this night a thousand vows have made:
Burn, undimmed star, flow, waters, without cease,
Thus bright and endless love may give us peace!

XVI.

THE EXHAUSTLESS THEME.

Within our love there is exhaustless theme,
Nor can I tire to speak its thousand cares,
When hope is bright, or darkened be its dream,
If rapt or sad, yet some new phase it wears;
As I do walk upon the crowded streets,
If from my sleep the starry heavens lure,
When some rich landscape still my vision meets,
Yet for that love I know that I were poor.
Within that theme all other themes I find,
Nor is there one in which it hath not part,
That golden light I'd see though I were blind,
For yet its flame feeds at thy lover's heart—
If time bring joy or saddened drag its length,
That thou dost love me therein lies my strength!

XVII.

NOT EVEN FATE.

Love, I have walked upon the crowded streets,
Thus to my brain forgetfulness to lure,
Yet thought of thee the foolish effort cheats,
And makes this present to the past how poor!
Here I do come unto this sacred room,
And shut the world out as I lock the door,
Yet still thine eyes look on me from the gloom,
As through the hours I ceaseless pace the floor;
O when I take the pen, as now, and write,
Yet think of thee and finish not the line,
Forget my words and know not of time's flight,
And hopeless sigh for that which once was mine;
Yet then alway, My Love, this truth is seen,
Not even fate shall change the days that's been!

XVIII.

THY GIFT OF FLOWERS.

Here on my study table dead it stands,
Thy gift of blossoms from thy northern vale,
Not as in living beauty from thy hands,
But withered now and all its leafage pale.
My treasure here stood in its dewy glow,
And made a fragrance in this silent room,
Yet like the wasted moments, wasted slow,
'Till dark and pallid all its silken bloom.
Love, here as with thy gift I pass the hours,
In weariness and pain I draw my breath,
Thy voice did whisper in those crimson flowers,
And now they bring, instead, a thought of death:
O thou art still relentless as a knife,
My hope is dead, and love stabs at my life!

XIX.

THE DEAD FLOWERS LIVE.

Ah, My Beloved, I scarce may think it true,
That o'er these withered blossoms bent thy face,
Or that the dreaded hours should be so few,
Before thou heardst the words care made me trace.
That thy soft hand hath touched again each spray,
It seems that yet a truth it cannot be,
That thou didst smile when I was sorrow's prey,
And was half angered when I told it thee.
Can it be true, My Love, that thou wert here,
And I did read my bitter sonnet then?
Or that thy voice did whisper in mine ear,
And made this withered bloom to live again?
Ah, what to me had all earth's flowers been dead,
When pillow'd on my arm was thy fair head!

XX.

AS SUNS OF AUGUST BURN.

The suns of August scorch the yellow grain,
And pale the hills are wrapped in whitened haze,
Like islands float the groves above the plain,
From skies unclouded comes the lambent blaze.
The roads are blinding in the floods of light,
The suns are followed with the burning moons,
Each day but dies to bring as rich a night,
And at the dawning, night in languor swoons.
The far earth-rim that with the haze is crossed,
This glowing landscape that is lying near,
One seems my life within the vanished past,
The other as the fervid moments here:
My soul to feast unto this present turns,
And love's fierce passion now as August burns!

XXI.

WHEN AUTUMN EVE IS RED.

Redly above the distant hills and groves,
The autumn moon looks on the russet fields,
Ceased are the bleatings of the huddled droves,
And harvest-wearied man to nature yields.
Redly the moonbeams on the stubble falls,
And red the twilight on the autumn fruit,
The poplars throw dark shadows on the walls,
The earth is hushed, the solemn air is mute.
Yet still I look along the darkened road,
And sigh for one who never more doth come,
My soul is weary with its heavy load,
And my heart's passion makes my being numb:
O now, as east and west, thy lips are red—
My love I'll take unto the narrow bed!

XXII.

BEYOND ALL SPEECH.

A saddened light comes from the autumn skies,
The dead leaves drop to earth without a sound,
And on my soul exhaustion's calm there lies,
I feel an unseen web that wraps me round.
Now from this solemn peace I hear death speak,
While at a truce with fate my soul is still,
And in love's struggle O I am grown weak,
Yet thine my heart, I wait upon thy will.
Once more the dead leaves tell of summer past,
The seasons change, unchanged my passion lives,
While nature warns, not aught of earth may last,
My dying hope a living hope yet gives:
O such a love thou didst thy lover teach,
That in my soul is love beyond all speech!



XXIII.

WHEN FIRST WE MET.

When first our eyes and when our hands first met,
That moment, My Beloved, thy voice I heard,
Then to its depths I felt my being stirred,
And ended was the hunger of the years.
O then I heard the music of the spheres,
The sunrise came into a darkened life,
And in that moment there was end of strife,
When first our eyes and when our hands first met.
Love waited, and you came to be my own,
Then sprang the blossoms covered o'er with dew,
And rapture filled with beauty time and place.
Thy glance, thy hand-touch, and thy voice's tone,
These for thy lover made the earth anew,
My fate I learned when I looked on thy face!

XXIV.

FOR ME THY PRAYER.

“I’ll pray God’s richest blessings shall be thine,”
Thy lover o’er and o’er these words hath said;
With lips that trembled he that message read,
And drank its meaning like the chaliced wine.
Yet thou, not I, O Love, be in the shrine;
In sorrow let me eat my daily bread,
Rather than thou shalt suffer in my stead,
Ask not again those blessings thus be mine.
Love unto thee return what thou didst seek,
More than for me desired, be thou His care;
And sorrow’s tears for me hath coursed thy cheek,
The burden of thy cross then let me share:
Love, in thy strength I would not be thus weak,
Though from thy lips should come the asking prayer.

XXV.

COULD WE BUT KNOW.

O is it thus: "We reap as we have sown"?
This path we follow, whither doth it lead?
Lost in our golden dreams, we did not heed
Fate's chilling wind upon the roses blown.
Love unto us the breath of life hath grown,
For sorrows borne within the past a meed;
With hands clasped o'er thy head I heard thee plead,
Make thine appeal unto the Great White Throne.
Comes there a dawn that will these shadows clear,
And truth be known and broken be our dreams?
Or is it but a longer night that's near,
The dews of death that on the roses gleam?
Love, I do yet believe Love need not fear,
Could we but know the will of the Supreme.

XXVI.

LOVE AND DEATH.

Proudly was spoken, Love, that wondrous vow;
The sacred place it yet more sacred made—
An open grave was near, a sexton's spade—
And in rapt silence that sweet speech I heard.
Slowly thy voice did utter each firm word—
“Until to nature the great debt is paid,
And on my lips eternal silence laid.”
I looked and knew that truth was on that brow.
A richer promise never uttered breath—
Lo, at our feet dead hearts returned to dust—
Thy song of passion triumphed o'er the dirge!
That vow our hearts made one in sacred trust,
And rightly spoken on the grave's dark verge,
For there we listened unto love—and death!

XXVII.

DEATH AND LOVE.

How full that hour, My Love, when at thy side—
Where gathered is that harvest that Death reaps,
Where lie the dead and still the year outsleeps—
And in my veins life moved in quickened tide!
There stands the scarlet poppy in its pride,
Around the grassy mounds the ivy creeps,
The lettered marble sacred record keeps,
Yet unto Death with kisses we replied.
Thy troubled soul did make thee as a dove,
Within thine eyes there gathered unshed tears.
Black as the poppy's heart was thy bowed head,
Yet like that emblem still thy lips were red.
We shrank not from the Shadow and its fears,
For that full hour we gave to Death—and Love!

XXVIII.

WITH BATED BREATH.

With bated breath we looked into the past,
And eager listened to each other's tale,
With cheeks that flushed or alternate were pale,
And found less strange the first word than the last.
Our inner gaze into time's gulf was cast,
As from the years we pushed aside the veil,
Till with emotion all our words did fail,
And we kept silent with our hands clasped fast.
Like to the waters of the wind-swept sea,
The passions of our souls did rise and fall,
For in our eyes we read each other's loss.
O then I pitied, as thou pitied me,
While in Love's nectar fell the drops of gall:
We kiss, but place between our lips—The Cross.

XXIX.

“WITHOUT EACH OTHER.”

“Without each other”—that I dare not think !
How incomplete would be our severed lives,
How unreached that for which the rapt soul strives,
If thus be broken now life’s golden link!
I dizzy stand upon a chasm’s brink,
For in that thought is that to madness drives,
My heart-strings ruthless it asunder rives,
O from those words how doth my being shrink!
Speak not, “Without each other” now, My Love:
The heart it makes as cold as any stone
O’er which the tide of Lethe darkly rolls.
What bitter ending, thus, when we so strove,
Such heights and depths of life as we have known !
Can even death divide our mated souls !

XXX.

MY HOPE AND FEAR.

Absent from thee I live in this one thought,
That time must pass and bring thee to my side,
I count the moments then that us divide,
And restless wait until love's hour is brought.
And yet love's hour is with this meaning fraught,
That I again with absence must be tried;
With laughter on my lips my soul hath sighed,
Thus I twixt hope and fear of love am caught.
My anxious mood, Beloved, thus ebbs and flows,
Now hope I hear like music in a shell,
Or as a warning on mine ear there grows,
A far-off sound like to a passing bell;
In absence still my heart but one wish knows,
With thee I dread to speak the word—Farewell!

FINIS.

